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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3437
INFO RUEHXK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

S E C R E T JERUSALEM 002188

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE; NSC FOR ABRAMS/RAMCHAND/PASCUAL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/03/2018

TAGS: PTER PREL PINR PHUM KWBG KPAL IS
SUBJECT: PA SECURITY OFFICIALS BELIEVE AL-AQSA MARTYRS
BRIGADES MEMBER WAS ASSASSINATED BY THE IDF

REF: A. JERUSALEM 1604
 1B. JERUSALEM 1365
 1C. JERUSALEM 544

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (S) Summary. Palestinian political and security contacts believe the IDF operation that led to the death of Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades (AAMB) member Mohammad Kamal Abu Thra'a on December 1 was conceived as an assassination operation from the outset, not as an arrest operation. End summary.

12. (S) PA Prime Minister Fayyad told the Consul General and Palestinian security contacts separately told PolFSN they believe an IDF operation that ended with the death of AAMB member Mohammad Kamal Abu Thra'a late December 1 near Balata camp in Nablus was an assassination operation from the outset, not an arrest operation as reported in Israeli press.

Acting Preventive Security Organization (PSO) head Ali Dakhilallah said the GOI had informed PSO it believed Abu Thra'a, who had previously been released under amnesty on the condition that he remained in PSO "protective custody" at night, had resumed activities with AAMB in violation of his partial amnesty. Dakhilallah said he expected the GOI to arrest in cases like this, but not to assassinate.

13. (S) Dakhilallah said a PSO vehicle used to transport Abu Thra'a from his home to PSO headquarters in Nablus nightly arrived at the Abu Thra'a residence at 2115 local to find an IDF undercover unit shooting outside the house. PSO agents reportedly saw Abu Thra'a pushed into an IDF vehicle. They found no blood trails outside the house leading PSO to conclude that Abu Thra'a was killed elsewhere.

14. (S) Israeli press quoted anonymous IDF officials saying that Abu Thra'a was shot while attempting to escape from custody. Palestinian security contacts told PolFSN December 3 that they had raised the incident with local IDF commanders, who neither confirmed nor disputed their version of events. Palestinian security contacts said the Israeli District Coordination Office in Nablus informed their counterparts they would investigate the matter. Fayyad also told the Consul General that West Bank COGAT Chief Mordechai said the IDF would investigate the incident.

15. (U) In a separate incident overnight December 2, Mohammad Ahmad Abu Amira, an AAMB member in Jenin refugee camp, was arrested at home. AAMB released a statement asserting that the two incidents cast doubt on the IDF's intentions for the amnesty program.

WALLES